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UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS.

THE

Golden Jubilee

OF

B. WESTERMANN & CO.

SUCCEEDED BY

LEMCKE & BUECHNER

December 4, 1898



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[From *The Publishers' Weekly*, December 3, 1898.]

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## JUBILEE OF B. WESTERMANN & CO.— LEMCKE & BUECHNER.

**B**USINESS careers of fifty years are naturally rare in a new country, and still more rare in a trade that traces a recognized existence but a short distance beyond half a century. We are well aware that there are several firms in the American book trade whose record, first as printers, and then as publishers and booksellers, reaches back into the beginning of the century; but there are hardly more than ten firms in existence to-day who have supported themselves for fifty years exclusively by making a market for the product of the printer and publisher—that is, who have been booksellers in the more precise sense of the word. This is really not so remarkable when it is considered that even in Germany—the cradle of the book trade as it is known to-day—with almost four centuries of trade history, the list of those who can trace their pedigree back fifty years exceeds the hundred mark by but a few names.

It is a rare pleasure, therefore, that *THE PUBLISHERS' WEEKLY* enjoys to-day, in chron-

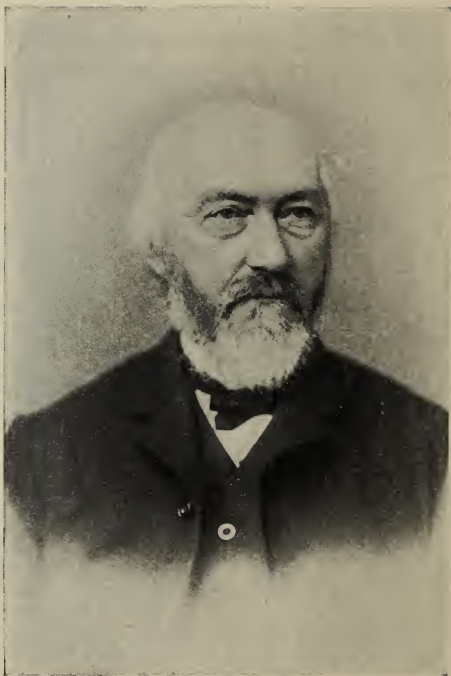
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icling the golden jubilee of one of its constituency. B. Westermann & Co., now Lemcke & Buechner, has reached the fiftieth year of its existence. There are few firms in any branch of mercantile life in this country that stand so high in the estimation of their colleagues as does the house represented to-day by Messrs. Lemcke and Buechner, and there is perhaps no one other firm that so uniformly enjoys the unqualified good-will of its contemporaries. One of the earliest of those who sought to blaze the way in the new world for the best in European culture and science, this firm has survived, through good times and through bad times, to retain its place in the vanguard of those to whom the book trade is dear as a profession, and has never failed to sacrifice even material interests in order that the best traditions of the trade might be upheld.

To the individual members of this firm we tender on this occasion the assurance of our most appreciative consideration, and on behalf of the trade, which they so worthily represent abroad as well as at home, we wish them the enjoyment of many years more of usefulness and prosperity.

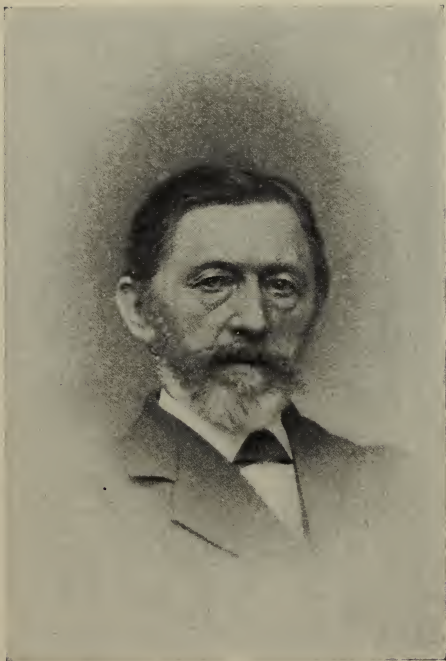
The career of the firm has been in brief as follows: The firm of G. & B. Westermann Brothers was established in New York, at 290 Broadway, on December 4, 1848, by Bernhard Westermann and his brother Georg, as a branch of their business in Braunschweig, Germany. From this firm Georg Westermann, the European partner, retired four years afterward, in





BERNARD WESTERMANN.

1814-1889.



AUGUST BUECHNER.

1824-1881.





order to devote himself exclusively to the interests of his own house in Braunschweig, (founded May 21, 1838,) and also because the American branch found it desirable to transfer its European agency to Leipzig, the centre of the German book trade. Georg Westermann was born in 1810 and died in 1879; he was one of the foremost publishers of Germany, and his firm holds its high rank to this day under the management of his son Frederick, who, thirty years ago, for a couple of years served as clerk in the New York house.

The firm in 1852 became B. Westermann & Co., with Bernard Westermann as the original American partner, ably assisted by August Buechner. From this time, too, Mr. Westermann dropped the "h" from his given name, and spelled it Bernard instead of Bernhard.

August Buechner, who will no doubt be remembered by many of the present generation, was born in Leipzig in 1824. After ten years' experience in some of the most prominent book establishments of Germany he was induced by Georg Westermann to connect himself with the American branch of his business. Mr. Buechner came to New York in 1849, and in 1855 was admitted to partnership in the firm of B. Westermann & Co. About this time the firm took into its employ Ernest Steiger, who was for ten years connected with the Westermanns. Another member of the staff, who subsequently also established himself in a similar branch, was Gustav E. Stechert.

August Buechner was a model of a trained

bookseller; an indefatigable worker, scrupulously accurate, attentive to his customers, and thoroughly posted on the book market. His knowledge of the book business was by no means confined to German literature, for the bibliographical apparatus which, under his direction, was built up by B. Westermann & Co. is easily the most comprehensive collection in the hands of any bookseller anywhere to-day. For years Mr. Buechner rendered American publishers invaluable services abroad by his familiarity with their productions, especially through the select lists he prepared for the *Börsenblatt*, the official organ of the German book trade.

Mr. Buechner died suddenly January 11, 1881, after an illness of only six days. In apparently good health, and of a seemingly strong constitution, he was attacked on the 5th of January by pneumonia. The best medical attendance and nurses at his home in Livingston Street, Brooklyn, failed to arrest the rapid progress of the disease and he died within the week.

Bernard Westermann was born in Leipzig, December 27, 1814. After the death of his associate, August Buechner, Westermann gradually withdrew from the active management of the business, which was left in the capable hands of Ernst Lemcke, who, having entered the employ of the house in 1869, became a partner of the firm in 1875, and of Mr. Buechner's eldest son, Oscar, who became a partner in 1887. Bernard Westermann died in Wiesbaden, January 24, 1889, since which time Ernst Lemcke

and Oscar Buechner have continued the business—until January 1, 1896, as B. Westermann & Co., and since then as Lemcke & Buechner.

The senior member of the firm—Ernst Lemcke—was born in Pasewalk, Pomerania, on March 19, 1844. He was duly apprenticed when fresh from the *gymnasium*, or college, to L. Saunier, a bookseller in Stettin. In view of the fact that he had been graduated from a higher educational institution, young Lemcke enjoyed the privilege of a three, instead of four years' apprenticeship, without any pay or board. In due time he became a clerk. His first clerkship in Berlin yielded him a monthly stipend that an American would scorn to accept as weekly wages. Nor was he much better off in Braunschweig, which he left to take a position in Paris at \$25 a month, with prospects of having this increased to perhaps \$40 a month; and yet, as Mr. Lemcke confided to the Booksellers' League, in an address delivered before that association on October 13, 1897, "I thought myself in clover." He came to New York in 1869.

Mr. Lemcke like his predecessor—August Buechner—is an indefatigable worker as a bookseller and bibliographer. As witness to the latter we need only refer to the excellent "Catalogue of World Literature," which thus far covers the best works in French and German literature. The selections are made with judicious care and an intimate knowledge of the subject, giving, besides the titles, thumbnail sketches of the authors, and helpful explanatory words to every book, besides other useful or pertinent

collateral information. Another piece of good bibliographic work produced by Mr. Lemcke every month is the supplement to the *Monthly Bulletin of World Literature*, which is a reliable guide to current and prospective foreign literature. In addition to these professional labors, Mr. Lemcke is an occasional contributor to the *New York Nation* and *Evening Post*. Nor is Mr. Lemcke's pen devoted exclusively to the service of his profession. He has found time to prepare an English book on "Skat," the German game of cards, which has run through two editions, and his versatility has been shown in his very able and dignified poetical "Réponse au rêve de M. François Coppée : 'A l'Empereur Frédéric,'" a production remarkable for its literary quality, and doubly remarkable as an evidence of the ability of its author to express himself as gracefully and clearly in a foreign tongue as in his own.

For years Mr. Lemcke has been a member of the *Deutsche Gesellschaft der Stadt New York*, a society for the protection of the interests of German immigrants, whose first President, in 1784, was Baron von Steuben. This society recently recognized Mr. Lemcke's services by unanimously electing him as its First Secretary. The German-American book trade, by the way, has always actively supported this society, one of its members—the late Rudolph Garrigue—having helped to reorganize the society and to make it an effective agent in the work it was created to perform.

Oscar Buechner, the junior member of the





ERNST LEMCKE.



OSCAR BUECHNER.





firm, was born in Brooklyn, N. Y., in 1858, and, after graduating from the Deghuée school there, continued his studies in Germany at the College of Lüneburg. He was then, in the old German fashion, apprenticed for three years to Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, one of the oldest firms of the German book trade, at Goettingen. After acquainting himself with the Westermann business at the Leipzig office, he entered the New York house in 1878, and became a partner in 1886—a worthy son of his lamented father.

Julius Helmich, afterwards L. W. Schmidt, who failed many years ago, Rudolph Garrigue, afterwards F. W. Christern, and now Dyrsen & Pfeiffer, W. Radde and the Westermanns were among the first German-American booksellers who supplied their patrons through direct and regular communication with Leipzig and other European publishing centres, and who kept full stocks which compared favorably with those of similar establishments in the more important German cities. This reputation has been maintained by G. & B. Westermann Brothers and their successors to the present time. More especially is this the case in the departments of classic Greek and Latin literature, and in medicine, art, and other specialties.

The firm has always been in business on Broadway. As already noted, they began at 290 Broadway, where, in addition to their regular bookstore, they maintained, until 1879, a large and important circulating library, that was patronized chiefly by the leading German-American merchants. Leaving their store at

290, the firm followed the upward movement of business along Broadway, settling at 440, 471, 524, 838, and then at their present quarters, at 812 Broadway. They have offices, also, in London, Leipzig, and Paris, and correspondents in all parts of the world. They do a large export trade with Central and South America and all parts of Europe.

Of the many assistants employed by the house a number may look back upon twenty-five to thirty-five years of service, passed in the most congenial surroundings, and under the most indulgent masters.

The business of Lemcke & Buechner with the German publishers is still carried on under the firm-name of B. Westermann & Co. Old and honorable connections are thus continued and the well-known name of the old house kept in existence.

A. G.



